NEWS ANALYSIS 1-1102 JULY 14, 1976
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A LOOK BACK AT THE EAST BERLIN SUMMIT

ANNCR: TWO WEEKS HAVE GONE BY SINCE THE CONCLUSION OF THE COMMUNIST SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN EAST BERLIN. AND IN THOSE TWO WEEKS THERE HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD DISCUSSION OF THE CONFERENCE AND ITS FINAL DOCUMENT, KNOWN AS "THE BERLIN DECLARATION." VOA NEWS ANALYST RONALD J. DUNLAVEY SURVEYS THE DISCUSSION:

VOICE: IN GENERAL, ANALYSES OF THE EAST BERLIN CONFERENCE SPLIT ALONG TWO LINES WHICH ARE IN CONFLICT WITH EACH OTHER.

ACCORDING TO ONE POINT OF VIEW, THE CONFERENCE WAS A HISTORIC EVENT WHICH SIGNALLED THE END, ONCE FOR ALL, OF THE CONCEPT OF THE COMMUNIST MONOLITH, WHICH RATIFIED THE INDEPENDENCE OF NATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTIES AND OF THEIR RIGHT TO FOLLOW THEIR OWN ROADS TO SOCIALISM---EVEN BY STICKING TO DEMOCRATIC METHODS---WHICH ACKNOWLEDGED THE END OF SOVIET DOMINATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT AND WHICH REPUDIATED THE SOVIET CLAIM OF THE RIGHT TO INTERVENE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COMMUNIST-RULED STATES. IN THIS VIEW, THE BERLIN CONFERENCE WAS A HISTORIC TRIUMPH FOR REVISIONISM AND WAS---FOR GENERAL-SECRETARY BREZHNEV, WHO ORGANIZED THE CONFERENCE--- AT BEST A RETREAT AND AT WORST A DEFEAT.

THE OTHER VIEW IS THAT MOST OF THIS TALK OF SOCIALIST AUTONOMY HAS BEEN HEARD BEFORE---FOR EXAMPLE, AT THE WORLD COMMUNIST CONFERENCE IN MOSCOW BACK IN NINETEEN SIXTY-NINE---AND THAT ITS SIGNIFICANCE IS LIMITED. IN THIS VIEW, THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE BERLIN MEETING ARE STILL AGREED ON THEIR BASIC GOALS--- THE DESTRUCTION OF CAPITALISM AND THE ASCENDANCY OF COMMUNISM-- AND THAT THE CONVERSION OF THE WEST EUROPEAN PARTIES TO INDEPENDENCE FROM MOSCOW AND TO DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES IS A

TEMPORARY POLITICAL TACTIC NECESSARY TO GAIN POWER. IT IS BEING POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH THE BERLIN DECLARATION MAY DOWNPLAY THE SOVIET ROLE IT IS A FACT THAT SOVIET ARMED FORCES REMAIN IN EAST GERMANY, POLAND, HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND THAT MR. BREZHNEV, IN HIS SPEECH, CONTINUED TO UPHOLD THE DOCTRINE OF "PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM," EVEN THOUGH MENTION OF IT WAS DROPPED FROM THE BERLIN DECLARATION AT THE INSISTENCE OF THE WESTERN EUROPEAN PARTIES. FROM THIS STANDPOINT, THE SOVIET LEADER---WHILE MAKING SUBSTANTIAL CONCESSIONS---HAS NOT SUFFERED A POLITICAL OR IDEOLOGICAL DEFEAT BUT HAS DISPLAYED A SENSE OF REALISM AND PRAGMATIC FLEXIBILITY IN ADJUSTING TO THE NEEDS OF THE MOMENT---OR, TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, HAS MERELY FOLLOWED LENIN'S CELEBRATED ADVICE BY TAKING THE ONE STEP BACKWARD WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY BE FOLLOWED BY TWO STEPS FORWARD.

BOTH SIDES IN THIS ANALYTICAL DEBATE SEEM TO AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT THE REAL MEANING OF THE BERLIN CONFERENCE CAN BE DETERMINED ONLY IN THE LIGHT OF FUTURE EVENTS. FOR EXAMPE, MORE THAN ONE SKEPTIC WILL WANT TO SEE HARD PROOF THAT THE WEST EUROPEAN PARTIES ARE TRULY AND PERMANENTLY FREE FROM MOSCOW'S MANAGEMENT AND GENUINELY DEDICATED TO THE ATTAINMENT AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF POWER BY PARLIAMENTARY MEANS, RATHER THAN SERVING AS A SOVIET FIFTH COLUMN. ATTENTION WILL BE FOCUSED, TOO, ON SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD BOTH WEST AND EAST EUROPEAN PARTIES. FOR EXAMPLE, IS MOSCOW WILLING TO EXTEND TO THE EAST EUROPEAN PARTIES---IN A CONCRETE WAY---THE RIGHTS OF AUTONOMY AND FREEDOM FROM INTERFERENCE WHICH ARE SET FORTH IN THE BERLIN DECLARATION? OR ARE THEY MERELY A RELUCTANT CONCESSION FOR WEST EUROPEANS ONLY? AND HOW SERIOUSLY DO THE EAST EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS TAKE THESE RIGHTS?

ONLY WHEN THESE AND SIMILAR QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED CAN THE FULL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BERLIN CONFERENCE---OR ITS LACK OF SIGNIFICANCE -- BE ADEQUATELY JUDGED. FOR IN ONE WAY, THE BERLIN DECLARATION RESEMBLES THE HELSINKI DECLARATION: BOTH ARE PROCLAMATIONS OF INTENT WHOSE ULTIMATE VALUE CAN ONLY REST ON THE SINCERITY WITH WHICH THEY ARE UNDERTAKEN BY THEIR SIGNERS, AND IN PARTICULAR BY THE SOVIET UNION.

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